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Attorney for Plaintiff,  
HUNG VANNGO

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

HUNG VAN GO,

Case No. 1:25-cv-2954

**Plaintiff.**

# **COMPLAINT FOR COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT**

MNK REALTY PROFESSIONALS LLC,  
and DOES 1 through 10 inclusive.

### Defendants.

Plaintiff, Hung Vanngo, for his Complaint against MNK Realty Professionals LLC and DOES 1 through 10 inclusive alleges as follows:

## **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

1. This is a civil action seeking damages and injunctive relief for copyright infringement under the Copyright Act of the United States, 17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.*

2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over Plaintiff's claim for copyright infringement pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 28 U.S.C. § 1338(a).

3. This court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant's acts of infringement complained of herein occurred in the state of Illinois, Defendant's acts of infringement were directed towards the state of Illinois, Defendant caused injury to Plaintiff within the state of Illinois, and Defendant has a physical presence in the state of Illinois.

4. Venue in this judicial district is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)-(d) and 1400(a) in that this is the judicial district in which a substantial part of the acts and omissions giving rise to the claims occurred, Defendant resides in or can be found in this district, Defendant conducts regular and substantial business in this district and/or is a corporate defendant whose contacts with this district are sufficient to subject it the personal jurisdiction of this Court.

PARTIES

5. Plaintiff Hung Vanngo is an individual and professional celebrity make-up artist by trade.

6. Defendant, MNK Realty Professionals LLC (“MNK” or “Defendant”) is an Illinois limited liability company with a principal place of business in Homewood, Illinois.

7. Plaintiff is unaware of the true names and capacities of the Defendants sued herein as DOES 1 through 10, inclusive, and for that reason, sues such Defendants under such fictitious names. Plaintiff is informed and believes and, on that basis, alleges that such fictitiously named Defendants are responsible in some manner for the occurrences herein alleged, and that Plaintiff's damages as herein

alleged were proximately caused by the conduct of said Defendants. Plaintiff will seek to amend the complaint when the names and capacities of such fictitiously named Defendants are ascertained. As alleged herein, "Defendant" shall mean all named Defendants and all fictitiously named Defendants.

8. For the purposes of this Complaint, unless otherwise indicated, “Defendant” includes all agents, employees, officers, members, directors, heirs, successors, assigns, principals, trustees, sureties, subrogates, representatives, and insurers of the Defendants named in this caption.

## FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

9. Hung Vanngo is a highly successful and popular celebrity makeup artist.

10. Vango's client list includes actors, musicians, and other major celebrities such as Selena Gomez, Emily Ratajowski, Jennifer Lawrence, Julianne Moore, Cara Delevingne, and Bella Hadid.

11. As part of documenting and promoting his work, Vanngo captures photographs of his clients and publishes them to his social media accounts.

12. Hung Vango is the sole author and exclusive rights holder to a photograph of Hailey Bieber sporting a natural makeup look, looking over her shoulder and directly into the camera.

13. Attached hereto as Exhibit A is a true and correct copy of the Bieber  
Photograph.

1           14. Hung Vanngo registered the Bieber Photo with the United States  
2 Copyright Office under Registration Number VA 2-240-148 with an Effective Date  
3 of Registration of January 26, 2021.

4           15. Attached hereto as Exhibit B is a true and correct copy of the  
5 Registration Certificate for the Bieber Photograph.

6           16. According to their website, MNK is a real estate brokerage firm. *See*  
7 *generally* [www.mnkrealty.com](http://www.mnkrealty.com).

8           17. MNK manages, operates, and controls the Facebook Account “MNK  
9 Realty Professionals LLC” [www.facebook.com/mnkrealty](http://www.facebook.com/mnkrealty) (“Defendant’s Facebook  
10 Account”).

11           18. On information and belief, Defendant’s Facebook Account generates  
12 content in order to promote Defendant’s products and services, attract social media  
13 followers, and user traffic to the Defendant’s main webpage, and generate profit and  
14 revenue for the company and its owner(s).

15           19. At all relevant times, Defendant’s Facebook Account was readily  
16 accessible to the general public throughout Illinois, the United States, and the world.

17           20. On or about December 30, 2023, Hung Vanngo discovered his Bieber  
18 Photograph copied and published on Defendant’s Facebook Account with the caption  
19 “Me Before and After getting my home value report done by MNK Realty! Just like  
20 makeup transforms a look, our expert insights can transform your understanding of  
21 your home’s worth. From ‘Hmm, I wonder’ to ‘Wow, I didn’t know that!’ – Let us  
22 uncover the hidden beauty in your property’s value” (“Infringing Post”).

1       21. Attached hereto as Exhibit C is a true and correct screenshot from  
2 Defendant's Facebook Account showing the Infringing Post.

3       22. Hung Vanngo has never at any point granted MNK a license or other  
4 permission to copy, display, distribute, or otherwise use the Bieber Photograph on  
5 Defendant's Facebook Account or any other platform.

6       23. MNK, including its employees, agents, contractors, or others over  
7 whom it has responsibility and control, copied and uploaded the Bieber Photograph  
8 to Defendant's Facebook Account without Hung Vanngo's consent or authorization.

9       24. Soon after discovering the Defendant's infringement of the Bieber  
10 Photograph, Hung Vanngo, through counsel, reached out to the Defendant to have  
11 the Infringing Post removed and to attempt to resolve this matter without court  
12 intervention, but the parties were unable to come to an agreement.

13       25. Hung Vanngo has never at any point given MNK a license or other  
14 permission to display, copy, distribute or otherwise use the Bieber Photograph in the  
15 Infringing Posts on Defendant's Facebook Account or on any other website or  
16 platform.

17       26. Vanngo is informed and believes that the purpose of the use of the  
18 Bieber Photograph on Defendant's Facebook was to promote and encourage use of  
19 the services that Defendant was recommending by providing a high-quality,  
20 professionally produced photograph to assist the viewer in visualizing the results that  
21 could be achieved by using the recommended services, as well as to assist with  
22 getting traffic to Defendant's website and growing Defendant's client base.

27. Vango is informed and believes Defendant (including its employees, agents, contractors or others over whom it has responsibility and control) used, displayed, published, and otherwise held out to the public Vango's original and unique Bieber Photograph for commercial benefit in order to acquire a direct financial benefit, through revenue from the sales of the recommended services and by encouraging users to visit its commercial website to utilize Defendant's services.

28. MNK (including its employees, agents, contractors, or others over whom it has responsibility and control) copied and uploaded the Bieber Photograph to Defendant's Facebook Account without Hung Vanngo's consent.

29. On information and belief, Defendant's use of the Bieber Photograph was deliberate and willful because it knew or should have known that it did not purchase a license to use the Bieber Photograph on Defendant's Facebook Account or in any other way.

**CAUSE OF ACTION**  
**COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT**  
**17 U.S.C. § 101 *et seq.***

30. Plaintiff incorporates by reference all the above paragraphs of this Complaint as though fully stated herein.

31. Plaintiff did not consent to, authorize, permit, or allow in any manner the said use of Plaintiff's unique and original Bieber Photograph.

32. Defendant(s)—including its employees, agents, contractors or others over whom it has responsibility and control—copied and uploaded the Bieber Photograph to Defendant's Facebook Account without Hung Vango's consent or

authorization.

33. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendant willfully infringed upon Plaintiff's copyrighted Bieber Photograph in violation of Title 17 of the U.S. Code, in that they used, copied, published, communicated, posted, publicized, and otherwise held out to the public for commercial benefit, the original and unique Bieber Photograph of the Plaintiff without Plaintiff's consent or authority, by using it in the Infringing Posts on Defendant's Facebook.

34. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that Defendant willfully infringed upon his rights in his copyrighted Bieber Photograph in violation of Title 17 of the U.S. Code because, inter alia, Defendants knew or should have known that they did not have a legitimate license to use the Bieber Photograph.

35. As a result of Defendant's violations of Title 17 of the U.S. Code, Plaintiff is entitled to any actual damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. §504(b), or statutory damages pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c).

36. As a result of the Defendant's violations of Title 17 of the U.S. Code, the court in its discretion may allow the recovery of full costs as well as reasonable attorney's fees and costs pursuant to 17 U.S.C § 505 from Defendant.

37. Plaintiff is also entitled to injunctive relief to prevent or restrain infringement of his copyright pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 502.

## PRAYER FOR RELIEF

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendant as follows:

- 1      • For a finding that Defendant infringed Plaintiff's copyright interest in
- 2                the Bieber Photograph by copying, displaying, and distributing it
- 3                without a license or consent;
- 4      • For an award of actual damages and disgorgement of all of profits
- 5                attributable to the infringement as provided by 17 U.S.C. § 504 in an
- 6                amount to be proven or, in the alternative, at Plaintiff's election, an
- 7                award for statutory damages against Defendant in an amount pursuant
- 8                to 17 U.S.C. § 504(c), whichever is larger;
- 9      • For an injunction preventing Defendant from further infringement of
- 10                all copyrighted works of the Plaintiff pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 502;
- 11      • For costs of litigation and reasonable attorney's fees against Defendant
- 12                pursuant to 17 U.S.C. § 505;
- 13      • For prejudgment interest as permitted by law; and
- 14      • For any other relief the Court deems just and proper.

15      Dated: **March 20, 2025**

16      Respectfully submitted,

17                **/s/ Mathew K. Higbee**  
18                Mathew K. Higbee, Esq.  
19                IL Bar No. 6319929  
20                **HIGBEE & ASSOCIATES**  
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**DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL**

Plaintiff Hung Vanngo hereby demands a trial by jury in the above matter.

Dated: **March 20, 2025**

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Mathew K. Higbee

Mathew K. Higbee, Esq.

IL Bar No. 6319929

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